

KATHY CASTOR  
14TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

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BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES  
AND THE CHINESE COMMUNIST  
PARTY



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0914**

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July 25, 2023

Office of Governor Ron DeSantis  
State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

RE: FY24 State of Florida Budget Energy Efficiency Funds Veto

Dear Governor DeSantis,

Your unilateral decision to prevent Floridians from enjoying energy efficiency discounts will prove to be very costly to Florida families and small businesses.<sup>1</sup> Our neighbors in Florida already are reeling from exorbitant electric bills and the most expensive property insurance rates in the country. Now, it feels like we have been pickpocketed by a governor who is elevating his political interests over the people's interests. It's wrong, and I urge you to reverse course now so that Floridians can put money back into their pockets at a time that they need it.

The aims of the historic Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are to lower energy costs for Americans, protect our communities, and reduce pollution. The Inflation Reduction Act is expected to reduce toxic air and carbon pollution by 40% in the next ten years. In less than a year since it was signed by President Biden, the Act also is promoting conservation, creating manufacturing jobs for American workers, and delivering a clean, secure, and healthy future for our children and grandchildren. The savings, jobs, and other benefits will reach communities across Florida, except you have single-handedly nixed one of the most significant tools to save Floridians money: energy efficiency savings.

The Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law make it more affordable for Americans to purchase energy efficient appliances when they need to, make repairs around their homes, and save money on their utility bills each month, through rebates covering 50-100% of the cost of installing new electric appliances, including super-efficient heat pumps, water heaters,

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<sup>1</sup> Line-item veto, 1463B of \$5 million in grants and aid to local governments from the Inflation Reduction Act, in the 2023 state budget that eliminates \$5,000,000 for hiring necessary personnel for the State of Florida to properly administer energy efficiency rebates of the Inflation Reduction Act as required by Federal law.

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clothes dryers, stoves, and ovens. In Florida, millions of households are eligible for rebates. Plus, additional rebates for repairs and improvements to single-family and multi-family homes to increase energy efficiency will be a godsend to working families. Now, due to your inexplicable gut punch to Floridians, those savings will go elsewhere.

Specifically, as a result of your veto, Florida will lose \$174 million in rebates for energy-efficiency improvements, \$173 million for rebates to purchase energy-efficient home appliances, and \$7 million for a training program for electrical contractors—a loss of \$354 million to the people of Florida. Floridians will lose a seventy-fold return on investment—money that would have gone directly to their pockets.

Governor, this summer the rising costs and impacts of the climate crisis are wearing on Floridians, yet you have your head in the sand—and it is costing us a fortune. You have shown no leadership in moving the “Sunshine State” to cleaner, cheaper energy. Florida is too dependent on fracked gas to generate electricity and that has severely pinched Floridians as electric bills have skyrocketed.<sup>2,3</sup>

Naysayers and vested dirty fuel interests often argue that the transition to clean energy is too costly. Actually, the cost of doing nothing—the status quo—is an enormous threat to Florida. The State simply cannot shirk its responsibility. The cost of clean energy has gone down significantly, and you could be doing more to help end the dependency on dirty energy that is costing us money and is bad for our health. Florida is more vulnerable than other states to significant economic damages, lost wages, mortality from extreme temperatures, and coastal property damage. Extreme weather is costing people too much. Florida is in the midst of its hottest year in modern history, with little sign of meaningful relief. This year, temperatures have averaged 3 to 5 degrees above normal. We’re about halfway through the summer of 2023 and we have already seen 32 days with a heat index of 100 degrees or higher in Tampa. The hotter temperatures are a threat to people who work outside and are harming Florida’s special ecosystems. Air conditioning is vital, but your actions will hurt the ability of Floridians to lower their bills and save money when we have to replace our AC.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/2023/05/15/florida-teco-electricity-rate-hikes/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://rmi.org/insight/x-change-electricity/>

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These high electric bills, soaring insurance rates (for those who can even get insurance), and out of sight housing costs are hammering Floridians—so every dollar counts for Florida families.<sup>4</sup>

Fighting culture wars does not save Florida families and small businesses money, does not ease inflation, does not stop the pollution that is overheating the planet, and certainly does not help everyday Floridians. While you may have forgotten what it is like to fight for families in Florida as your attention is elsewhere, I urge you to reconsider imposing an even higher cost of living on our Florida neighbors and bring our tax dollars home to serve the best interests of Floridians.

Sincerely,

*Kathy Castor*

Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress

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<sup>4</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/florida-insurance-homeowners-aaa-farmers-fd8df5314e8214a46a5fc38ef822a376>